Governor Cuomo Proposes to Tackle a “Lightweight” Issue in His 2020 State of the State Address

by John Szalasny

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7 Comments

New York State is starting to understand why the plastic crisis matters. We are three months away from implementing the Plastic Bag ban. Governor Cuomo proposed expansion of the bottle bill in his 2019 State of the State address to include more beverages to improve plastic container recycling rates. In 2020, his address will propose a state-wide Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) food container ban.

As most of you know, in January, 2018, China placed a ban on the imports of plastic waste. Their “National Sword Campaign” has upended the global recycling industry. This affected our local municipal
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There have been bans that have been proposed through most of the decade in the State Government. The bills gathered little interest, even with environmentalists, until this year when statewide bans were passed in Maine, Maryland and Vermont. But the focus of even these efforts came about when the foam container ban in New York City went into effect after a 3½ year legal battle. It also spurred the passage of similar legislation in Suffolk, Nassau and Westchester counties (joining Albany, Dutchess, Putnam and Ulster counties). The cities and counties with active Styrofoam bans entering 2020 constitute two-thirds of the New York population.

Dow Chemical Corp. introduced Styrofoam products in the United States in 1954. In 2016, Americans threw away 25 BILLION Expanded Polystyrene cups, enough to circle the earth 436 times. Add in an equally staggering number of clam shell containers, trays to display grocery store meats, egg containers (not to mention the Styrofoam used in packaging). And remember, that unless it has been recycled or burned, that all of the petroleum-based plastics ever produced still exist today. This adds up to a mountain of trash that threatens to bury us.

The Governor’s proposal appears to mirror the Styrofoam ban in New York City which went into effect on January 1, 2019, and the proposal has earned praise from groups like the Sierra Club. But since the Governor’s proposal is not scheduled to be in effect until 2022, local communities (like the City of Buffalo and Village of East Aurora) should continue to work on their current local bans. There is one other current legislative proposal that would be complementary to the Governor’s proposal. S06813/A08722 is an amendment to the Public Health Law proposed by Sen. Jen Metzger. It would require food service establishments to permit the use of reusable beverage and food containers provided...
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by customers when requesting a beverage refill or requesting leftovers from a partially consumed meal to be packaged and post signs to inform customers that they are permitted to do so.

Her research for this amendment has shown there are no state health laws against the practice of using refillable containers, and no reporting of any kind of cross-contamination or illness caused by someone using their own container for coffee or water.

Bringing your own container and eliminating the need for Styrofoam (or any other single use plastic) in the first place is the best solution to slow down the mushroom cloud explosion of plastic waste.

The next best solution is to let your local and state representatives know that reducing plastic waste for public health and environmental concerns is important to you.

If you would like to keep up with the progress of Styrofoam bans or other plastic waste issues statewide or around the world, I would recommend the following Facebook groups: Bring NYC’s Styrofoam Ban to My Hometown! and Beyond Plastics.

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New York State
Plastic bags
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Written by
John Szalasny

John Szalasny is someone who cares about our planet. Born too late to join in on the first wave of organized environmental action in the 60’s, I’m making up for lost time as I get nearer to retirement on various environmental concerns including the plastic waste crisis.

Check out my Facebook group Bring NYC’s Styrofoam Ban to My Hometown! https://www.facebook.com/groups/2098476837129562/. 
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The tax revenue alone can rebuild 30 Humboldt Parkways and a much needed pedestrian bridge between the Inner and Outer harbors.

David Jaskier
• 23 days ago

That JaBozo of whom you speak is our esteemed governor who deserves our support and respect. HaHaHaHaHaHaHaHa...ROTHFL

That PINHEAD did the next best thing to legalizing it. He EXECUTIVE-ORDERED the NY Courts to eliminate bail on select criminal activities like robbery and drug possession. So if an individual fires up a joint before a cop or shoots up outside of a precinct, that individual is out of jail until trial. Then that individual gets slapped on the wrist with a promise not to do it again, flipping off the testifying officer on the way out. LOL!

Instead of tax revenues, court fees and repeated court fees would be able to fund those projects.

pauleywallnutz • 23 days ago

Well, if you're talking about crack, heroin, opioids or any other "REAL" class 1 narcotics, that is sad. Pot is a plant and has been politicized forever and purposely classified as a Class 1 narcotic to enhance and expedite the "classroom to prison pipeline" to keep the privatized jail cells full of victimless potheads who did nothing more than puff a joint for a little pleasurable relaxation! Violent criminals using hard drugs is another story!

You sound pretty "hardcore" to me....maybe you're heavily vested in Geo Group or CoreCivic stock and enjoy making money off of innocent victims incarcerated for nothing more than a mere puff of smoke!

Happy New Year to you!

David Jaskier • 23 days ago

Thanks for your comment. It's refreshing to hear other opinions. Happy, Prosperous, Safe and Healthy 2020 to you also!

pauleywallnutz • 23 days ago